



CD 2002-107

Wednesday Discovery
presents

KLEZMER MUSIC

featuring

Brian Katz, guitar
Martin van de Ven, clarinet

Wednesday, October 16, 2002
12:10 pm. Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

Don't Worry, You Can't Fall Off the Floor
(Based on Nisht Gezort)

Naftule Spilth far dem Rebn - Mayn Eltern's Fargenign
(Traditional)

Galitsyaner Boogie

Zemer Atik
(Ancient Melody)

The rest of the programme will be announced.

Next Wednesday

The French Connection

Clarinetist Max Christie and pianist Lydia Wong perform music by composers
influenced by the French musical scene of the mid-20th century: Poulenc,
Martinu and Copland

Welcome to Klezmer

Klezmer is the traditional folk music of the Ashkenazi Jews. The origin of Klezmer music lies with late 19th century Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. In the mid-nineteenth century, pogroms began that would eventually culminate in the Holocaust. Large numbers of Yiddish speaking Jews emigrated to Canada, the United States, Australia and other more hospitable locations. (There is a well-documented 80-year tradition of performance of this music in Canada.) The Holocaust had a devastating effect on the ongoing development of Yiddish culture. Jews everywhere responded by becoming more assimilationist or more insular, in an attempt to survive the horrific events surrounding them. In Israel, Yiddish and Yiddish culture became reviled, identified as the language of meek victims who passively accepted their fate in the gas chambers with prayers on their lips.

As Jews began to come to grips with this century's history, a renewed interest in Yiddish culture emerged. One of the significant manifestations of this renewed interest was the revival of Klezmer music. In the 1960's young Jewish musicians (importantly, Michael Alpert, Alan Bern and Henry Sapoznik) began collecting and studying 78RPM recordings; they sought out master Klezmer musicians from the early 20th century such as Dave Tarras, Sid Beckerman and the Epstein brothers, studied with them and encouraged them to perform again.

Today Klezmer music is no longer the domain of Jewish musicians or played at Jewish functions only; it's exponents and their audience reflect an ever-widening public. A body of music that has been played primarily at social functions has now found its way to the concert stage, folk / jazz festivals and clubs. In the 1990's particularly, this evolution resulted in some Klezmer musicians extending the tradition by drawing on an ever-increasing variety of musics. This paved the way for Klezmer music to become a vibrant cultural force again.

The challenge for those 1990's Klezmer musicians was to find appropriate musical languages that honour what had been the centre of the tradition while organically creating something new. As all true oral traditions do, Yiddish culture has transformed itself from generation to generation.

Meet the Artists

"The audience was spellbound . . . They 'play' the 'stars' down from heaven" Dagblad van het Noorden, Holland

Martin van de Ven and Brian Katz Klezmer Duo performs new arrangements and original compositions rooted in the music of the Ashkenaz Jew of Eastern Europe. Together they bring superb musicianship and spirited, original interpretations to their repertoire. They have toured extensively in Europe in the past few years, performing in Holland and Switzerland. Recent Toronto performances include Mel Lastman Square, Friends of Yiddish concert series, Free Times Café Klezmer series, Mezzetta World music/Jazz series and the Mazon Canada benefit, held at Roy Thomson Hall. Other Canadian performances include concerts at the McDonald-Stewart Art Center in Guelph, as part of the Guelph University concert series) and the McMaster University concert series in Hamilton. They have recently recorded *Collected Stories*, their first CD as a duo.

Clarinetist, composer, arranger and recording artist van de Ven's background is in classical and new music. However, he has had a lifelong love for East European musical traditions. Martin has recorded and toured with the Flying Bulgar Klezmer band, the Alten Yildiz Orkester and currently plays with Beyond The Pale and Chutzpah! He has performed with Alan Bern and Michael Alpert of Brave Old World and David Karkauer of the Klezmatics.

Acclaimed guitarist, pianist, composer and recording artist Brian Katz brings to the duo his extensive experience as a classical, jazz, and Klezmer artist. Well-known as a soloist, Brian also collaborates widely. Stage partners have included saxophonist Jane Burnett, Ernie Tollar, guitarists William Beauvais, Mordy Ferber and pianist/composer Bill Douglas. Brian's longstanding love of Jewish music has led to collaborations with Yiddish singers Beth Ann Cole, Alan Merovitz and Dave Wall. Brian is also a certified Dalcroze Eurhythmics teacher and is currently a part-time faculty member at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.

Martin and Brian both hold Master of Music degrees from the University of Toronto and are as dedicated to the teaching of music as much as performing it. Their concerts are infused with lots of interesting information about the music they are performing; as well, they provide ample opportunities for the audience to sing, clap and move to the music.